

Judicial

Circuit Court

Guardian Ad Litem

Seminole County

Mission

To advocate for the best interest of abused, neglected or abandoned children in judicial proceedings. The program recruits, trains, and supervises volunteers to represent the best interest of children in civil and criminal cases.

Business Strategy

The Seminole County Guardian Ad Litem Program began in 1980 as part of a pilot project to test the effectiveness of lay citizens as advocates for abused and neglected children. It developed as a result of a Federal mandate known as the Child Abuse and Treatment Act. This mandate was later codified in Florida Statutes, most specifically, F.S. 39.822. This statute requires the appointment of a Guardian Ad Litem for any child suspected of being abused or neglected in any criminal or civil proceeding. Further, F.L. 61.041, provides for the appointment of a Guardian Ad Litem in an action for dissolution of marriage, or modification, if there are substantial allegations of abuse.

The volunteer Guardian Ad Litem is the only independent advocate for the child and has the responsibility for advancing what is in the best interest of the child. Guardians are required to gather information, act as a monitor, assure the child's protection, and finally make written and oral reports to the Court containing information and recommendations until the court terminates jurisdiction.

Volunteers are trained, screened and supervised by a full-time professional staff. Twenty-seven hours of pre-service training is provided five times a year to maintain an incoming flow of available volunteer advocates. In-service training sessions are held on a monthly basis.

Objectives

Maintain or increase the number of volunteers; assure quality legal representation.

Provide for increased representation of child victims in delinquency and criminal proceedings to meet the statutory mandate.

Performance Measures

	<u>FY 01/02 Actual</u>	<u>FY 02/03 Estimated</u>	<u>FY 03/04 Projection</u>	<u>FY 04/05 Projection</u>
Average daily caseload	325	330	347	360
Volunteer hours	140,000	147,000	160,000	172,000
Children represented	420	435	440	492

Department:		JUDICIAL			Seminole County	
Division:		CIRCUIT COURT			FY 2003/04	
Section:		GUARDIAN AD LITEM			FY 2004/05	
	2001/02 Actual Expenditures	2002/03 Adopted Budget	2003/04 Adopted Budget	Percent Change 2003/04 Budget over 2002/03 Budget	2004/05 Approved Budget	Percent Change 2004/05 Budget over 2003/04 Budget
EXPENDITURES:						
Personal Services	37,765	32,279	33,601	4.1%	47,591	41.6%
Operating Services	20,439	27,985	16,767	-40.1%	22,858	36.3%
Capital Outlay	0	0	0		0	
Debt Service	0	0	0		0	
Grants and Aid	0	0	0		0	
Reserves/Transfers	0	0	16,641	100.0%	0	-100.0%
Subtotal Operating	58,204	60,264	67,009	11.2%	70,449	5.1%
Capital Improvements	0	0	0		0	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	58,204	60,264	67,009	11.2%	70,449	5.1%
FUNDING SOURCE (S)						
General Fund	58,204	60,264	67,009	11.2%	70,449	5.1%
TOTAL FUNDING SOURCE (S)	58,204	60,264	67,009	11.2%	70,449	5.1%
Full Time Positions	1	1	1		1	
Part-Time Positions	0	0	0		0	
New Programs and Highlights for Fiscal Year 2003/04						
Reserves reflect 25% of the total budget, excluding computers and communications equipment, due to the implementation of Article V in July of 2004.						
New Programs and Highlights for Fiscal Year 2004/05						
Capital Improvements	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	
Total Project Cost	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Operating Impact	0	0	0	0	0	